Part II – How to engage with one another

"People in Poverty face challenges virtually unknown to those in middleclass or wealth – challenges from both obvious and hidden sources. The reality of being poor brings out a survival mentality, and turns attention away from opportunities taken for granted by everyone else"   Ruby K. Payne, PhD

Goal: To explore the different facets in the culture of poverty, learn about the ways that individuals and families who live in poverty are different from middle income and wealthy families and how these differences impact their lives.

Purpose: To explore the characteristics of generational poverty and situational poverty; the hidden rules among the classes, the role of resources, language, role models and support systems.

Objectives:

1.Build on Part I to see how poverty impacts individual and diverse group members.

2. Take a deeper look at poverty and what happens to human beings who live in poverty in order to understand their lives.

3. To use this knowledge to enhance our communication skills to better serve our clients and increase our effectiveness.

Handout # 2
(3 pages)

- will Receive during training

Application Discussion

1. What is the importance of being "bilingual" or "bi-dialectical," that is, having the ability to go between casual and formal registers?

2. What is the role of verbal and nonverbal communication, and what impact could each have when solving community problems?

3. What are effective ways to teach formal register to those who generally have access only to casual register?

4. What are the possible benefits and costs of learning and using formal register? Conversely, how can we help people from middle class realize the importance of relaying information in casual register?

5. Discuss language and social advantage/disadvantage. How might casual register be advantageous in poverty?

6. When communicating about mutual expectations, how might language-use differences help and hinder the process?

7. If someone who is making the transition from poverty to middle class has and uses the formal register, how will this impact that person's journey?

8. How do you prepare middle-class agencies to communicate effectively (regarding nonverbal communication and language registers) with those in poverty?

9. What role might language registers and story structure play during organizational and community meetings (such as a Bridges Steering Committee meeting) which include individuals from all economic classes?

10. What impact would overuse of formal register have at organizational or community meetings where not everyone uses formal register and its story structure?

Resources and Definitions

We will be using the following definition of poverty:
The *"extent to which an individual does without resources"*

The Resources are:

FINANCIAL: Having the money to purchase goods and services.

EMOTIONAL: Being able to choose and control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations, without engaging in self-destructive behavior. This is an internal resource and shows itself through stamina, perseverance, and choices.

MENTAL: Having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, computing) to deal with daily life.

SPIRITUAL: Believing in divine purpose and guidance.

PHYSICAL: Having physical health and mobility.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS: Having friends, family, and backup resources available to access in times of need. These are external resources.
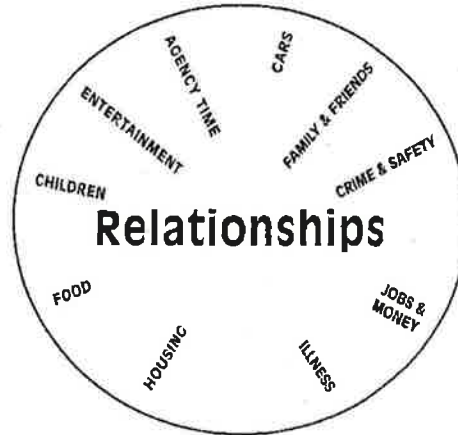
RELATIONSHIPS/ROLE MODELS: Having frequent access to adult(s) who are appropriate who are nurturing to the child, and who do not engage in self-destructive behavior.

KNOWLEDGE OF HIDDEN RULES: Knowing the unspoken cues and habits of a group.

COPING STRATEGIES: Being able to engage in procedural self-talk and the mindsets that allow issues to be moved from the concrete to the abstract. It is the ability to translate from the personal to the issue.

Poverty

AGENCY TIME · CARS · FAMILY & FRIENDS · CRIME & SAFETY · JOBS & MONEY · ILLNESS · HOUSING · FOOD · CHILDREN · ENTERTAINMENT

Relationships

Middle Class

HOBBIES & INTERESTS · EDUCATION · FAMILY & FRIENDS · CLUBS & CIVIC GROUPS · CAREERS · PREVENTION · HOUSING & ASSETS · RETIREMENT · CHILDREN · VACATIONS

Achievement

Wealth

TRAVEL · OVERSIGHT OF CORPORATE PROPERTY, PERSONNEL CONCERNS · CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES · MEDIA & POLITICAL LINKAGES · EVENT SPONSORSHIP ATTENDANCE · VACATION · LAWYERS & ACCOUNTANTS · NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ADVISERS · BOARDS OF DIRECTORS · PRIVATE CLUBS & ASSOCIATIONS

Connections
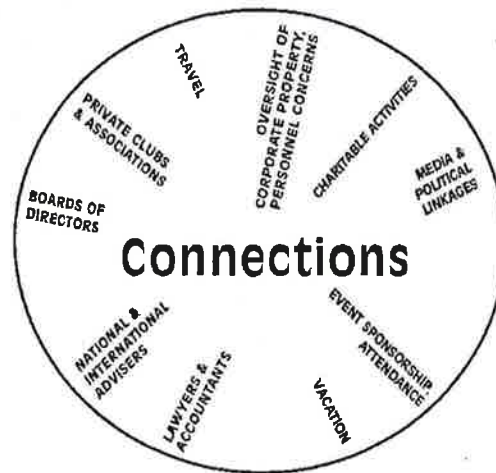
Registers of Language

REGISTER	EXPLANATION
FROZEN	Language that is always the same; for example, Lord's Prayer, wedding vows, etc.
FORMAL	The standard sentence syntax and word choice of work and school. Has complete sentences and specific word choices.
CONSULTATIVE	Formal register when used in conversation. Discourse pattern not quite as direct as formal register.
CASUAL	Language between friends, characterized by a 400- to 800-word vocabulary. Word choice general and not specific. Conversation dependent upon nonverbal assists. Sentence syntax often incomplete.
INTIMATE	Language between lovers or twins. Language of sexual harassment.

Adapted from Martin Joos' research by Ruby K. Payne in *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*

Translating from One Register to Another

On the left-hand side of the page, write down phrases members say in your interactions that are in casual register. Then translate those phrases into formal register. Work with your table or a partner. An example is provided.

Casual _____ Formal _____

That sucks!   There is no longer any joy in this activity

MODULE #6
The Role of Language and Story

NOTE: Most of the information in this module can be found in the *Bridges Out of Poverty* book, Chapter 2.

- Significant learning and change require a relationship of mutual respect.
- Relationships begin and end with language; that is why registers of language and discourse patterns are beneficial to know.
- Language development birth to age 3 is associated with cognitive development, school readiness, and school and workplace success.

Hidden Rules of Language
- Middle class—use of formal register for negotiation; verbal, abstract, and proactive skills are necessary
- Poverty—use of casual register for survival
- Wealth—use of formal register for networking

Eighty percent of our communication in any register is nonverbal.

Language and Power
- Casual is more accurate.
- Formal has more power.
- Communication problems can be a balance-of-power problem.
- When the balance of power is relatively equal, candid communication can take place.
- Listening is an attitude more than a skill.

"When cultures break down, and parents can't mediate the world for their kids, then it's a broken culture."

–Reuven Feuerstein

People in poverty are problem solvers. The Bridges work is based on this construct.

Establishing Relationships – Communication Guidelines

DEPOSITS	WITHDRAWALS
Seek first to understand	Seek first to be understood
Keeping promises	Breaking promises
Kindnesses, courtesies	Unkindnesses, discourtesies
Clarifying expectations	Violating expectations
Loyalty to the absent	Disloyalty, duplicity
Apologies	Pride, conceit, arrogance
Open to feedback	Rejecting feedback

Adapted from Stephen Covey; *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

DEPOSITS MADE TO INDIVIDUAL IN POVERTY	WITHDRAWALS MADE FROM INDIVIDUALS IN POVERTY
Appreciation for humor and entertainment provided by the individual.	Put-downs or sarcasm about the humor or the individual.
Acceptance of what the individual cannot say about a person or situation.	Insistence and demands for full explanation about a person or situation.
Respect for the demands and priorities of relationships.	Insistence on the middle-class view of Relationships.
Using the adult voice.	Using the parent voice.
Assisting with goal-setting.	Telling the individual his/her goals.
Identifying options related to available Resources.	Making judgments on the value and availability of resources.
Understanding the importance of personal freedom, speech, and individual personality.	Assigning pejorative character traits to the individual.

Mediation and Tools for Building Future Story

Mediation is described as an intervention by a caring and nurturing individual who offers the *What* (points out the stimulus), the *why* (gives it meaning), and the *how* (provides the strategy) of the learning or change process. This is a tool that gives us everything we need to accurately see and assess the present situation, the meaning of what is happening, and how we might approach things effectively.

> If individuals depend on a random, episodic story structure for memory patterns, live in an unpredictable environment, and *have not developed the ability to plan*, then....
>
> If individuals cannot plan, they *cannot predict.*
>
> If individuals cannot identify cause and effect, they *cannot identify consequence.*
>
> If individuals cannot identify consequence, they *cannot control impulsivity.*
>
> If individuals cannot control impulsivity, they *have an inclination toward criminal behavior.*
>
> -Reuven Feuerstein

The most important aspect of using mediation is that it maintains respect between individuals and supports changes. It is recommended that when using this tool, you share the tool with the individual who is in the change process. The best place, however, for using the mediation tool is inside our minds. It is important that we have access to this tool and come to the point in this process where we can use it when we are alone. We can direct our own mediation process. We can then use mediation ourselves when we encounter problems, asking ourselves what is the *what,* the *why* and the *how* to problem-solving.

Application Discussion:

1. Consider your own change processes. Describe how you approach change when you understand the meaning of the change or learning, compared with when you focus only on the how or the strategies available to change.

2. Identify situations in your interactions with clients, members, staff where mediation is used effectively.

Cultural Diversity & Competence - part
Marta F. Nieves – Journey Consulting
April 2012

Handout # 11

-will Receive
during training

Handout # 12

- will Receive during training